Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-06 H-02 INR-06 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 UPW-01 IO-11

AID-20 RSR-01 /106 W

R 160510Z AUG 71
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8705
INFO AMCONSUL DANANG
USDEL FRANCE
CINCPAC

UNCLAS SAIGON 13057

DEPARTMENT PASS AMBASSADOR BUNKER; CINCPAC FOR POLAD.

SUBJECT: GENERAL MINH'S SECRET DOCUMENT

1. FOLLOWING IS UNCUT TEXT OF STORY FILED FROM SAIGON BY KEYES BEECH (CHICAGO DAILY NEWSON AUGUST 12 REPORTING THAT GENERAL MINH HAD GIVEN DEPUTY AMBASSADOR BERGER DOCUMENTS PROVING THAT PRESIDENT THIEU WAS RIGGING THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

2. BEGIN TEXT. BEECH SAIGON -- PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DUONG VAN (BIG) MINH THURSDAY MET WITH DEPUTY AMBASSADOR SAMUEL D. BERGER AND TURNED OVER TO HIM DOCUMENTS PURPORTING TO SHOW THAT PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU HAD RIGGED THE OCTOBER PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

3. A SPOKESMAN FOR MINH SAID THE DOCUMENTS WERE SECRET INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE TO PROVINCE CHIEFS AND MAYORS ON HOW TO GUARANTEE A THIEU VICTORY IN THE LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS AUGUST 29 AND THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS OCTOBER 3.

4. MINH AND BERGER MET FOR TWO HOURS AND 20 MINUTES AT MINH'S HOME. AT THE SAME TIME THEY WERE MEETING VICE PRESI-

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REVIEWED BY Joan Zyber DATE 1/26/82
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TS AUTH. REASON(S)
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SENT NGUYEN CAO KY WAS HOLDING A PRESS CONFERENCE AT INDEPENDENCE PALACE TO DENOUNCE THIEU FOR FORCING HIM OUT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST.

5. MINH'S SUPPORTERS SAID THE DOCUMENTS GIVEN BERGER INSTRUCTED PROVINCE CHIEFS TO USE A VARIETY OF MEANS TO PARALYZE HIS CAMPAIGN. ONE DEVICE, ACCORDING TO THESE SOURCES, WAS TO TRANSFER ALL LOCAL OFFICIALS WHO MIGHT FAVOR MINH'S CANDIDACY.

6. ANOTHER, ACCORDING TO THE SAME SOURCES, WAS TO HAVE LOCAL POLICE, SECURITY AGENTS AND OTHER OFFICIALS INTIMIDATE THE VOTERS.

7. MINH'S SUPPORTERS SAID THE ENTIRE RESOURCES OF THE U.S.-FINANCED PHOENIX PROGRAM, DESIGNED TO ROOT OUT THE VIET CONG INTRASTRUCTURE, WERE TO BE THROWN INTO THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST MINH.

8. MINH, WHO HAS REPEATEDLY THREATENED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE CAMPAIGN IF THE ELECTION IF RIGGED, REPORTEDLY ASKED BERGER WHY IN THE FACE OF SUCH EVIDENCE HE SHOULDN'T QUIT NOW.

9. BERGER REPORTEDLY URGED MINH TO STAY IN THE RACE IN THE INTEREST OF A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH VIETNAM.

10. MINH HAS UNTIL AUGUST 24 TO WITHDRAW OR FORFEIT HIS CAMPAIGN DEPOSIT OF 2 MILLION PIASTERS ($16,950).

11. THAT, MINH TOLD BERGER, IS A LOT OF MONEY. HOWEVER, MINH PROMISED NOT TO MAKE ANY MOVE UNTIL THE RETURN OF AMBASSADOR ELLSWORTH BUNKER, NOW IN WASHINGTON FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH PRESIDENT NIXON.

12. IT WAS NOT KNOWN HERE WHEN BUNKER WILL RETURN. HE WAS SCHEDULED TO BE GONE FOR ONLY ONE WEEK.

13. SOME OF MINH'S SUPPORTERS HAVE BEEN URGIN HIM TO WITHDRAW ON THE GROUND THAT HE HASN'T A CHANCE OF WINNING BE EEHE ELECTION WILL BE MASSIVELY RIGGED AGAINST HIMR. TO STAY IN THE RACE, THE CONTEND, WOULD MERELY BE DOING THIEU

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A FAVOR BY GIVING THE ELECTION AN AURA OF RESPECTABILITY.

14. ON THE OTHER HAND, BOTH AMERICANS AND VIETNAMESE AGREE THAT IF THIEU RUNS UNOPPOSED IT WILL BE A "DISASTER" BOTH HERE AND IN THE U.S.

15. SENIOR U.S. OFFICIALS HERE HAVE SUGGESTED THAT SOUTH VIETNAM MIGHT BECOME "UNGOVERNABLE" IF THIEU IS THE ONLY CANDIDATE. THEY HAVE ALSO HINTED THAT CONGRESS MIGHT VERY WELL CUT OFF ALL AID TO THE THIEU REGIME. END TEXT.
BERGER